

VZCZCXRO8089  
OO RUEHDE RUEHDIR  
DE RUEHKU #1099/01 1911311  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 101311Z JUL 07  
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9584  
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 1069  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 1060  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 0287  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 3068  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 0393  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 0984  
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA IMMEDIATE 0108  
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE 0567  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 0390

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 001099

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ARP, INL/HSTC, AND G/TIP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/10/2027

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [KU](#) [TIP](#)

SUBJECT: LABOR MINISTER TO TAKE "TIP" BULL BY THE HORNS

REF: A. KUWAIT 1094

[1](#)B. KUWAIT 1070

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary and Comment: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Shaykh Sabah Al-Khalid told the Ambassador on July 9 that the Cabinet had focused its attention on trafficking and had given him full authorization to take decisive steps on fighting trafficking in persons. The Minister hinted that other governmental entities had been ineffective and indicated that he was determined to take decisive action. He said MOSAL would draw up a comprehensive plan soon and that tangible progress would be forthcoming in a number of areas: a shelter, a decree clarifying the illegality of passport withholding, and awareness raising. He also mentioned that the GOK was working seriously on longer-term measures, including an anti-trafficking law and bilateral Memoranda of Understanding with labor-sending countries. End Summary and Comment.

[1](#)2. (C) Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Shaykh Sabah Al-Khalid told the Ambassador on July 9 that in its most recent meeting the Cabinet had given him full authorization to take decisive steps on fighting trafficking in persons. The minister said the issue had received major cabinet-level interest and that the Minister of Interior had agreed to let the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL) take the lead on addressing the problems faced by domestic workers, including working directly with the Interior Ministry unit that regulates domestic labor. (Note: See ref A concerning the Ambassador's July 8 discussion on TIP with the Minister of Interior. End Note.) He said that within the next week the GOK would draw up a specific anti-trafficking plan with all the steps it would take. He predicted progress in a number of specific areas within the next few weeks and said he personally would speak to the public via the media to explain the GOK's plan.

Shelter Coming Soon

[1](#)3. (C) The minister said that action on a shelter for trafficking victims would come next week. He said he would sit down with officials in the health and interior ministries to work out the details of such a shelter, including the location, the staff, and the roles of the various ministries. He blamed the delay on the difficulty of getting the

Municipal Council to allocate a parcel of land for the shelter, but said the GOK had decided to rent one or more buildings in order to get work started immediately.

#### Ministerial Decree on Withholding of Passports

-----

¶4. (C) The minister said that MOSAL would issue a ministerial decree within approximately a week emphasizing that employers' withholding of passports is illegal. At a July 1 meeting (ref B), the GOK Committee to Respond to International Human Rights Reports promised to provide evidence that courts regularly ordered employers to return passports to workers. (Note: GOK officials have repeatedly told Emboffs that withholding of passports by employers against employees' will is illegal. However, it remains a common practice. In fact, GOK officials often justify the practice by saying that it provides assurance to the employer that the employee will not abscond with company property.)

#### Anti-Trafficking Law

-----

¶5. (C) The minister said that Kuwait already has sufficient laws to prosecute any crime related to trafficking. However, he also said it would redound to Kuwait's benefit to have a specific law on trafficking. He noted that the Ministry of Justice has completed a draft anti-trafficking law, which now must be approved by the cabinet and parliament (see ref B).

#### Multi-Language Awareness Raising Brochures

-----

KUWAIT 00001099 002 OF 002

¶6. (C) Shaykh Sabah Al-Khalid said he received word July 9 that 4,000 of the seven-language brochures MOSAL has created are now ready for distribution at the airport, at recruitment agencies, and at Kuwaiti embassies abroad. The brochures detail the procedures and costs for various MOSAL transactions that concern workers. PolOff suggested that the GOK also hand out embassy-produced brochures, which contain more general advice, such as what to do if caught by the police (see ref B).

#### MOUs with Sending Countries

-----

¶7. (C) The minister reported that many of the problems in Kuwait stem from unscrupulous labor recruitment agencies in sending countries. At the June ILO meetings in Geneva he met with labor ministers from a number of Arab and Asian countries whose citizens work in Kuwait to discuss the problems faced by workers on both ends. He reported that he had proposed that Kuwait and each of the sending countries sign a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding that would detail the roles of the sending and receiving countries in reducing workers' complaints.

\*\*\*\*\*  
For more reporting from Embassy Kuwait, visit:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/kuwait/?cable s>

Visit Kuwait's Classified Website:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/kuwait/>  
\*\*\*\*\*

LeBaron